

*Application No. 10/733,410*  
*Amendment dated January 23, 2006*  
*Reply to Office Action of October 21, 2005*

*Docket No. 0649-1004PUS1*  
*Art Unit: 3616*  
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**Amendments to the Drawings**

Two Sheets of Replacement Drawings (FIGS. 6 and 7) are attached.

**REMARKS**

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1, 4-11, and 14-20 are amended. Claims 1 and 11 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

**Foreign Priority Claim**

The Examiner has acknowledged the Applicant's claim for foreign priority.

**Drawings**

In response to the Examiner's objection to the drawings, FIGS. 6 and 7 have been relabeled as "Prior Art".

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph**

Claims 4-6, 8-10, and 14-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has set forth certain instances wherein the claim language is not clearly understood.

In order to overcome this rejection, the Applicant has amended claims 4-10 and 14-20 to correct each of the deficiencies specifically pointed out by the Examiner. The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim

the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a)**

Claims 1, 3-7, 11, and 13-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by AAPA shown as FIG. 7;

claims 1, 2, 4, 11, and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 09-207855;

claims 3, 5-9, and 13-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP09-207855 in view of AAPA FIG. 7; and

claims 10 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP09-207855 in view of AAPA FIG. 7, and further in view of Summers et al. (U.S. 5,715,903).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steering shaft support structure, including *inter alia*

a cross beam being placed in spanning relation between left and right pipes composing said body frame, the cross beam having a first arcuate portion formed on a center portion thereof;

a front holder having a second arcuate portion formed on a center portion thereof;  
and

said first and second arcuate portions interlockingly support the steering shaft on the body frame in a rotatable manner.

In addition, independent claim 11 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steering shaft support structure, including *inter alia*

a cross beam being placed in spanning relation between the left and right supports, the cross beam having a first arcuate portion formed on a center portion thereof;

a front holder having a second arcuate portion formed on a center portion thereof;  
and

said first and second arcuate portions interlockingly support the steering shaft on the body frame in a rotatable manner.

Support for the above novel features can be seen, for example, in FIGS. 3-5.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including AAPA FIGS. 6 and 7 and JP09-207855.

In the present invention, one of the holders (64a) (66a being the other holder) is integrally formed with the cross beam 64 to thereby reduce numbers of required components and also reduce weight of a vehicle (see FIGS. 4 and 5).

Further, since a recess is formed on the cross beam 64 so as to form the first arcuate portion 64a, the steering shaft is prevented from protruding forwardly.

On the contrary, in FIGS. 6 and 7 of the present application, which show prior arts, support portions 103, 113 and 114 rotatably supporting steering shaft are attached to a

front portion of the cross beam 116 or the bracket 112. The support portions are not integral with the cross beam.

Thus, the steering shaft according to FIGS. 6 and 7 protrudes frontwardly. Further, the support portion 114 is separated from the cross beam, the numbers of components are increased. Furthermore, the support portion 114 is merely attached to a front face of the cross beam, and is not placed in spanning relation between left and right pipes, as recited in claims 1 and 11.

As for JP09-207855, this document merely discloses a holder 110 integrating two divided holders.

Thus, even if a skilled person were to combine FIGS. 6 and 7 with JP'855, simply an integrated holder, in which support portions 113, 114 of FIGS. 6 and 7 are integrated would be obtained. That is, a structure in which a part of the support portion rotatably supporting the steering shaft is formed on the cross beam according to the present invention is not obtained.

At least for the reasons explained above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including AAPA FIGS. 6 and 7 and JP09-207855.

Therefore, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 4-9 and 14-19 have been amended.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) are respectfully requested.

### **CONCLUSION**

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

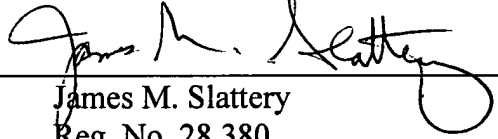
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Attachments: Two Sheets of Replacement Drawings (FIGS. 6 and 7)